

Message Text

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61

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 270558Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3492

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVEUR

USAFE

USAREUR

USCINCEUR

USMTM DHAHRAN

S E C R E T SANAA 571

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, UK, YE, QA, FR

SUBJ: FRANCE CHALLENGES BRITISH MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS

CONTRACT IN YEMEN; SEEKS MOVE INTO MILITARY SUPPLY

KUWAIT PASS DOHA

REF: SANAA 256

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR CARDEN CALLED MARCH 25 TO REPORT
DISTURBING DEVELOPMENTS RE RECENTLY SIGNED CONTRACT
BETWEEN YARG AND BRITISH COMMUNICATIONS FIRM RACAL,
DESCRIBED REFTEL, UNDER WHICH LATTER TO PROVIDE
EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING FOR YAR MILITARY VALUED AT
2.9 MILLION POUNDS STERLING.

2. ACCORDING TO CARDEN, RACAL CONTRACT CALLED FOR
YARG (USING SAUDI MONEY) MAKE FIRST PAYMENT 45 DAYS

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FOLLOWING CONTRACT SIGNATURE. YARG NOW INTERPRETING

THIS TO MEAN THAT DURING THIS PERIOD IT FREE ENTERTAIN COMPETITIVE OFFERS. WHILE THIS PATENTLY NONSENSE FROM A LEGAL POINT OF VIEW IT HAD BEEN USED AS PRETEXT TO ACCEPT AN OFFER FROM A COMPETING FRENCH FIRM THOMPSON, FOR 6000,000 POUNDS STERLING LESS THAN RACAL OFFER. IN THE VIEW OF HMG AND RACAL, THOMPSON OFFER IS BEING SUBSIDIZED BY GOF AS A BID TO GET FRANCE INTO THE MILITARY PICTURE IN YEMEN. IN PERHAPS PARTISAN OPINION OF BRITISH, THOMPSON EQUIPMENT AND EXPERIENCE SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW RACAL STANDARD.

3. IN EFFORT MAKE COMEBACK, CARDEN SAID RACAL HAS OFFER TO PAY ALL EXPENSES FOR YEMENI MILITARY TEAM VISIT ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRY IN WHICH RACAL HAS MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT. SYRIA IS BEING PUSHED AS BEST EXAMPLE OF QTE PROGRESSIVE UNQTE ARAB COUNTRY, WITH SOVIET MILITARY INVENTORY, YET RELYING ON AND SATISFIED WITH BRITISH COMMUNICATIONS.

4. SUPPLEMENTING RACAL'S EFFORTS, CARDEN HAS ALSO BEEN WORKING DISCREETLY WITH SYMPATHETIC YARG OFFICIALS. HE THINKS THAT AS RESULT, THE DOOR MAY BE OPEN TO A REAFFIRMATION OF ORIGINAL RACAL CONTRACT.

5. CARDEN SAID HE HAD ADDITIONAL RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT FRENCH HAVE SUBMITTED A MILITARY SUPPLY PROPOSAL TO YARG. WHILE DETAILS NOT KNOWN, PROPOSAL INCLUDES FOOD SUPPLIES, UNIFORMS AND ARTILLERY. FIRST TWO, AT LEAST, ARE AT WELL BELOW MARKET PRICES, POINTING TO A COME-ON SUBSIDIZED BY GOF.

6. COMMENT: FOREGOING ARE NOT THE ONLY EVIDENCES OF MOUNTING GOF INTEREST IN NORTH YEMEN. EMBASSY HAS BEEN REATHER HEAVILY INVOLVED IN A EFFORT HELP TO PUT ACCROSS A PRIVATE AMERICAN PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF TELEVISION STATION IN SANAA. THE CHIEF AND AS OF NOW MOST LIKELY SUCCESSFUL COMPETITOR IS FRENCH SECAM SYSTEM.
CRAWFORD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY SALES, CONTRACTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PROPOSALS (BID)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SANAA00571
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740066-0692
From: SANAA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740311/aaaaajvv.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: SANAA 256
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <04 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANCE CHALLENGES BRITISH MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT IN YEMEN; SEEKS MOVE INTO MILITARY SUPPLY
TAGS: MASS, SA, UK, YE, QA, FR, RACAL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005